National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

Potential contributions of food consumption patterns to climate change

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Year: 2009
Journal: The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. 89 (5): 1704S-1709S

Abstract:

Anthropogenic warming is caused mainly by emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs), such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, with agriculture as a main contributor for the latter 2 gases. Other parts of the food system contribute carbon dioxide emissions that emanate from the use of fossil fuels in transportation, processing, retailing, storage, and preparation. Food items differ substantially when GHG emissions are calculated from farm to table. A recent study of approximately 20 items sold in Sweden showed a span of 0.4 to 30 kg CO(2) equivalents/kg edible product. For protein-rich food, such as legumes, meat, fish, cheese, and eggs, the difference is a factor of 30 with the lowest emissions per kilogram for legumes, poultry, and eggs and the highest for beef, cheese, and pork. Large emissions for ruminants are explained mainly by methane emissions from enteric fermentation. For vegetables and fruits, emissions usually are

Source: http://dx.doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.2009.26736AA

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Unspecified Exposure

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

Health Co-Benefit/Co–Harm (Adaption/Mitigation):

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to reduce or cope with greenhouse gases

A focus of content

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

Intervention:

strategy to prepare for or reduce the impact of climate change on health

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Mitigation

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified